

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



NEWS RELEASE

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Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #56

SEINE FISHERIES: Eggtakes are underway at SGH, with approximately 64% of the final goal completed through August 14. A pink salmon cleanup fishery at the head of Port Valdez is possible upon completion of VFDA's eggtake operations, with time and area to be announced at a future date.

PWSAC completed its pink salmon cost recovery program on July 31, and reports a current cumulative mid-range hatchery escapement estimate of 750,000 pink salmon at AFK, CCH, and WNH. PWSAC's final broodstock needs include a cumulative hatchery escapement of 949,000 pink salmon at all three facilities. PWSAC and ADF&G will be conducting aerial surveys at AFK and CCH, respectively, and will incorporate escapement observations into management strategy for fishing opportunity in the vicinity of these facilities. There will be a news release at 2 pm on Friday, August 16, announcing fishing opportunity for Saturday, August 17 through Monday, August 19.

ADF&G sampling of CPF harvest from the Northern, Coghill, and Southwestern districts on August 10 resulted in estimated sex ratios of 52% female, 58% female, and 55% female, respectively. ADF&G sampling of pink salmon harvested in the Eastern, Coghill, and Southwestern districts on July 30 resulted in an average weight of approximately 2.8 pounds per fish. Final harvest numbers for the August 14 fishery in Prince William Sound are unavailable at the time of this announcement; however, it is estimated that at least 7.07 million pink salmon were harvested from August 12 through August 15 using this average weight. Cumulative pink salmon harvest totals for Prince William Sound through August 14 include approximately 1.8 million VFDA cost recovery fish, 1.7 million PWSAC cost recovery fish, and an estimated 71.9 million CPF fish. This is a record CPF pink salmon harvest for Prince William Sound.

ADF&G otolith contribution estimates for the August 8 Southwestern District CPF result in a harvest composition of 92% hatchery and 8% wild stock pink salmon, with a wild stock harvest of approximately 127,000 pink salmon. Of the estimated 1.40 million hatchery fish harvested on this date, the hatchery composition is as follows: 58% AFK, 26% WNH, 13% CCH, and 3% SGH.

EASTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Eastern District, south of a line from Entrance Point to Potato Point, will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 14-hour fishing period beginning at 6:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm on Friday, August 16. Harvest estimates for the August 11 through August 13 Eastern District CPFs are confidential. Cumulative Eastern District harvest through August 13 was 231 Chinook, 12,600 sockeye, 7,660 coho, 25.2 million pink, and 99,300 chum salmon.

NORTHERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Northern District, **excluding waters of the Cannery Creek Subdistrict north of 60°58.00' N.**, will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 14-hour fishing period beginning at 6:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm on Friday, August 16. Pink salmon harvest estimates for recent Northern District CPFs include 830,000 on August 11, with 78 deliveries; 650,000 on August 12, with 85 deliveries; 550,000 on August 13, with 45 deliveries. Cumulative Northern District harvest through August 13 was 24 Chinook, 2,970 sockeye, 1,820 coho, 13.1 million pink, and 5,590 chum salmon.

COGHILL DISTRICT: Waters of the Coghill District, **including waters of the WNH SHA up to a line of buoys in front of the barrier net**, will open to commercial DRIFT GILLNET and PURSE SEINE fishing for a 14-hour fishing period beginning at 6:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm on Friday, August 16. Pink salmon harvest estimates for recent Coghill District CPFs include 196,000 on August 11; 161,000 on August 12; 254,000 on August 13. There were 94 purse seine and 233 gillnet deliveries reported for these periods.

NORTHWESTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Northwestern District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 14-hour fishing period beginning at 6:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm on Friday, August 16. Pink salmon harvest numbers for the August 11 Northwestern District CPF are 35,900 pink salmon, with 6 deliveries reported. There was no harvest reported for the August 12 or August 13 Northwestern District CPFs. Cumulative Northwestern District harvest through August 13 was 485 sockeye, 85 coho, 132,000 pink, and 167 chum salmon.

SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Southwestern District, **excluding waters of the AFK SHA**, will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 14-hour fishing period beginning at 6:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm on Friday, August 16. Harvest estimates for recent Southwestern District CPFs include 1.58 million pink and 55 sockeye salmon on August 11, with 117 deliveries; 1.73 million pink and 23 sockeye salmon on August 12, with 140 deliveries; 1.71 million pink and 33 sockeye salmon on August 13, with 136 deliveries. Cumulative Southwestern District harvest through August 13 was 196 Chinook, 36,600 sockeye, 15,800 coho, 21.8 million pink, and 226,000 chum salmon.

MONTAGUE DISTRICT: Waters of the Montague District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 14-hour fishing period beginning at 6:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm on Friday, August 16. Pink salmon harvest numbers for the August 13 Montague District CPF are confidential. There was no harvest reported from the August 11 and August 12 Montague District CPFs. Cumulative Montague District commercial purse seine harvest through August 13 was 120,000 pink salmon.

SOUTHEASTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Southeastern District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 14-hour fishing period beginning at 6:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm on Friday, August 16. There was no harvest reported for the August 11 through August 13 Southeastern District CPFs. Cumulative Southeastern District harvest through August 13 was 263 Chinook, 8,770 sockeye, 1,390 coho, 2.79 million pink, and 41,000 chum salmon.

The next scheduled PURSE SEINE salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to occur by 2:00 pm Friday, August 16.

Permit holders are advised that unscheduled announcements based on current escapement data may occur at any time inseason either establishing an additional period or extending an open period.

Announcement recordings are available for **gillnet fisheries at 907-424-7535 and seine fisheries at 907-424-7345. In addition, announcement recordings are available in Anchorage at 267-2843.**

Additionally, announcements, inseason harvest data, and escapement data are available at the following web addresses:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.main> (Copper River homepage) or
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareapws.main> (Prince William Sound homepage).

Unless otherwise specified, all openings are clock openings based on Alaska Daylight Time, which is based on Coordinated Universal Time and may be obtained by calling 303-499-7111.

The department encourages commercial permit holders to renew their licenses early and to check their CFEC vessel registration stickers to make sure that they are current.

The department also encourages permit holders to report observed violations to Wildlife Safeguard at 800-478-3377. Reports are anonymous and cash rewards may be paid for successful prosecution of violations.

PWS commercial fishers are reminded that area fisheries often necessitate fishing in close proximity to marine mammals. Under the Marine Mammals Protection Act (MMPA), the PWS drift gillnet fishery is classified as a Category II fishery. Participants in Category I and II fisheries must be registered in the Marine Mammal Avoidance Program (MMAP) to be authorized for lawful incidental, but not intentional, marine mammal takes during fishing. However, this authorization explicitly does **not** exempt holders of commercial fishing permits from the MMPA prohibition on takes of marine mammals listed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act. As a participant in the PWS drift gillnet fishery you are automatically registered in the Marine Mammal Authorization Program (MMAP) by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). As a participant in a Category II fishery, you must:

- Maintain an MMAP Authorization Certificate, or a photocopy, on board the vessel while engaging in any of the fisheries identified on the reverse side of the certificate. For non-vessel or set net fisheries, the enclosed Certificate, or a photocopy, must be in the possession of the permit holder during fishing operations. This Certificate, in combination with a current, valid state or Federal fishing permit, will serve as your authorization to incidentally take non-endangered or non-threatened marine mammals in the course of commercial fishing operations.
- Report all injuries and mortalities of marine mammals within 48 hours of returning from the trip during which these takes occurred using the MMAP Mortality/Injury Reporting Form (visit http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/interactions/mmap_reporting_form.pdf for a copy).
- If so requested, take an observer aboard your vessel.

Purse seine and set gillnet gear are classified as a category III fisheries under the MMPA. Category III fishery participants are automatically exempted from the incidental take prohibition in the MMPA. Therefore, you do not need to maintain the MMAP certificate aboard your vessel, but must report any incidental takes of marine mammals within 48 hours of the incident or your return to port. Such reports must be made on the Marine Mammals Authorization Program Mortality/Injury Reporting Form.

Because some marine mammals are also listed under the Endangered Species Act, incidental takes are also regulated under that act and are not authorized. **All** MMPA category fisheries are liable for incidentally taking ESA listed species.

Please reference http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/esa_factsheet.pdf for a list of marine mammals currently listed under the ESA (you should periodically check with the National Marine Fisheries Service for any changes in listed species). Under the ESA, take means to "harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct." 16U.S.C. 1532(19); and harass means an "intentional or negligent act or omission which creates the likelihood of injury to the wildlife by annoying it to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavioral patterns which include, but are not limited to, breeding, feeding, or sheltering." (50 C.F.R. 17.3).

To reduce the possibility of incidentally taking an ESA listed species and its associated liability ADF&G recommends that:

- Fishermen participating in area fisheries remain vigilant in monitoring gear when marine mammals may be present.
- Fishermen use avoidance measures (e.g., not fishing or relocating fishing activities when marine mammals are present or likely to be present) to minimize interactions with marine mammals.
- Avoid fishing in areas where marine mammals are likely to be present at night or when visibility or weather conditions make it difficult to spot marine mammals.

For further questions concerning marine mammal regulations call NMFS at 907-271-5006.